

we need investment in Main Street as well as Wall Street. I have sponsored legislation to give small businesses incentives to invest and grow, and I hope that the President will tell us tonight how all Americans can prosper together and not just the large corporations and the fortunate who are their shareholders.

Mr. Speaker, the key to economic success begins with education. The President needs to keep his promise to truly leave no child behind by committing tonight to providing the resources that America needs to have the best public school system in the world. Also, we must make college affordability a national priority. Recent tuition increases have put college out of reach for too many Oregon and American families. I will be working on the Committee on Education and the Workforce to make college more affordable and accessible.

In closing, we must work together to address the most important issues facing our Nation, extending unemployment benefits, investing in Main Street small businesses, and providing the best education possible to all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEVIN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### STATE OF OUR UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss what I hope President Bush will address this evening in his State of the Union message. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I would like to place President Bush's speech in some context which I believe America should use in evaluating the President's address.

We can all agree that the President will give a good speech. He has prac-

ticed, he has rehearsed and he will do a good job. However, I hope that his rhetoric will match actions that will benefit all Americans and benefit all Americans soon. It was just last year that the President stood in this hallowed hall and set forth a number of priorities that were to guide this Nation throughout 2003. I, along with the rest of the Nation, listened very intently to the President searching for some affirmation in his speech of the principles that have successfully guided our constitutional democracy thus far. The Founding Fathers of the United States understood that governments are instituted to secure the God-given rights of all men and women to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In 1976, the late Senator Hubert Humphrey said, "The moral test of government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this administration has miserably failed that test. As stewards of the government, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that the poor are granted the same access to opportunity as the rich; the sick are afforded the medical attention needed to restore health; and that the scourge of racism and discrimination is forever dispelled from our national identity.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that the true measure of our Union is the state of the least among us. So long as there are 9 million Americans looking for work, 43 million Americans without health insurance and nearly 2.5 million American men, women and children without a place to call home, then America has not reached her full potential. We need leadership that demands equity, parity and equality. We need leadership that is progressive and forward-thinking. And, Mr. Speaker, we need leadership that delivers results to all of the American people.

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The American people deserve bold leadership, the demands of frank and honest discussion of the issues that are at the center of people's lives.

Just yesterday, we celebrated the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, and I have noted so often we listen to the "I Have a Dream" speech; but one of the things that he said is that every citizen should demand the full, the full, the full measure of their citizenship. In other words, what he was saying was that this Nation owes every citizen certain rights and at the same time every citizen has a duty and responsibility to this Nation.

Since the President's last State of the Union Address in 2003, our Nation waited in vain, Mr. Speaker, for the President to recognize the importance of liberty, diversity, and charity beyond the superficial context of a speech. Yes, the President is quick to

say that he is compassionate and conservative. As I have said on many occasions, I have seen much of our President's conservatism. So we are long on conservatism, but it appears that we are very short on compassion. Americans look to the President to set forth policies that would transform these lofty ideals into reality for almost 300 million men, women, and children that reside in our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, a year later, we see that the President has not yet been able to synchronize his conscience with his conduct. Yes, we have a lot of photo-ops, but the photo-ops do not bring a paycheck to that worker in Baltimore who has been laid off for the past year. It does not bring an insurance policy for health insurance to that mother in Appalachia who has no insurance; nor does it bring the \$7.5 billion to our education system where children need computers, children need books, children need better classroom atmospheres so that they can grow up to be all that God wants them to be.

So it was last year, Mr. Speaker, that the President stood before this Nation, as he will do tonight; and there he announced the new initiative to fight the war against global HIV/AIDS with \$15 billion to the global fund. After years of work by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), my colleague in the Congressional Black Caucus, and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), our health chairperson, and many of my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus urging the Congress to be more proactive in fighting this epidemic, the Congressional Black Caucus applauded the President's effort.

We are very pleased that he had listened to us 3 years ago. By the way, I might add that it was 3 years ago when the President met with the Congressional Black Caucus; but 3 years later after many requests, he refuses, actually refuses to meet with the 39 members of the Congressional Black Caucus who represent over 26 million people, at least a third of whom are white. And it is interesting that he laid a wreath at the Martin Luther King memorial just a few days ago and then turned right around the next day and appointed Judge Pickering from Mississippi, whom, as a matter of fact, every civil rights organization in the country had opposed and he had been opposed by the Congressional Black Caucus; but this President saw fit to appoint a man who had been turned away by the Senate twice.

So we come back to today. A year later we are already underfunding our annual contribution commitment by \$600 million, that is, to the AIDS fund, the global AIDS fund, by \$600 million. It was just this weekend that members of the Congressional Black Caucus met with the U.N. ambassadors from Africa and they talked about how so many of their people are dying; but yet and still, after we agree that \$15 billion should be allocated, we come up \$600